

TORONTO STAR

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GTA

Charges laid at two massive protests in downtown Toronto on Saturday

Each protest garnered over 5,000 people, one starting at Queen's Park and the other gathering at Nathan Phillips Square.

By **Breanna Xavier-Carter** Staff Reporter

 **Sun., May 16, 2021** |  2 min. read

 Article was updated May. 17, 2021

READ THE CONVERSATION

Police laid a number of charges after two large protests in downtown Toronto on Saturday.

Together, both events attracted more than 10,000 people, Toronto police said in a [written release](#).

From noon to 4 p.m., an anti-lockdown protest marched from Queen's Park through downtown, and from 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., pro-Palestinian rallies gathered at Nathan Phillips Square.

Several surrounding intersections were blocked by cars and protesters waving flags.

Police said two officers received minor injuries at the first event, including one who was bitten.

Tarik Khaled Elzaabalawi, 24, of Mississauga was charged with two counts of assaulting an officer and mischief under \$5,000.

At the second event, two more people were charged. Hamza Alkisiwany, 22, of Thornhill, faces an assault charge. Connor Campbell, 29, of Toronto was charged with bringing a weapon to a public meeting.

Toronto police are also investigating a separate incident seen in a video posted on social media, where a man was assaulted by several people near Nathan Phillips Square. Anyone with information, including images or videos, is asked to contact 52 Division at 416-808-5200, or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

"Police are continuing to investigate this event and have been clear that organizers and attendees of events are subject to enforcement and that charges can be laid in the days following events," the release said.

Police said they will continue to enforce provincial COVID-19 emergency orders.

"When thousands of people gather for demonstrations or protests, the priority of the police must be to keep the peace and take steps to protect the safety of all involved," the release also said.

Pro-Palestinian protesters took to the streets of Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia and other cities on Saturday to demand an end to Israeli airstrikes over the Gaza Strip.

The protests were stoked by five days of military action that left at least 145 Palestinians dead in Gaza and eight dead in Israel.

The violence, set off by Hamas firing rockets into Israel on Monday, came after weeks of mounting tensions.

Correction — May 17, 2021: This article was edited to correct that the protest that began at Queen's Park was in opposition to lockdown measures, not masks.



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